# Hisamatsu's Philosophy of Awakening

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In the course of his long life of ninety years, Hisamatsu Shin'ichi wrote numerous books and delivered countless lectures covering a wide range of subjects: contemporary trends in philosophy, theories of religion, Christian theology, Western mysticism, Buddhist thought, sutras, sastras, Zen texts, and the problems of art, history, society, and politics. Essentially, though, he was concerned with expressing just one thing: "Awakening" as the fundamental self-realization of man. For Hisamatsu, the problem was never *what* to say. From beginning to end, *what* he wanted to say was invariably settled, and unmistakably clear. The problem was only *how* to express it in adapting it to the general tendencies of philosophy, religion, and history, and in response to those whom he addressed, so as to make them awaken to it.

Although I said that *what* he spoke of was invariably settled, this does not mean it is in any way fixed as "something." Actually, its being always clear as no "something" whatsoever is precisely why it remains invariably settled. Since it remains settled in this sense, it expresses itself freely in accordance with everything. Such an ever-clear realization as the agent of free and unrestricted self-expression, Hisamatsu refers to as Awakening. All of his philosophical utterances are self-expressions of this Awakening. Accordingly, his "philosophy of Zen," if we may call it that, is nothing other than a "philosophy of Awakening."

Philosophy, however, was not the only mode of expression of this fundamental Awakening. Calligraphy, painting, and poetry all became vehicles of awakened self-expression. Hisamatsu was especially fond of the tea ceremony, which for him was also an expression of the same Awakening, transcending all tea schools and ceremonial forms. In fact, everything about his life—his everyday conversation, his way of receiving

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callers, his laughter and silence—was a self-expression of Awakening. Here again, *what* was expressed was always the same, yet *how* it was expressed differed with the time and the occasion.

To understand Hisamatsu and his philosophy of Awakening, the most important thing for us to realize is that the same *what* was always expressed in all of his activities, whether philosophy, art, or life itself. Prior to any of his expressions, his very being, his Self, was that *what*—the fundamental self-realization of man embodied in the word Awakening.

Hisamatsu's philosophy, then, however important it may be, was but one of many self-expressions of his Awakening, all stemming from the same source. The philosophy of Awakening differs in no way from a flower arranged by Hisamatsu for the tea ceremony. In that one flower his philosophy is fully manifested. Those who cannot see the philosophy of Awakening in that flower will fail to see it in his philosophical works as well. The same can be said of an ordinary word of greeting spoken by Hisamatsu. Containing the philosophy of Awakening, his greeting of "How are you?" inquires directly into the foundation of the other's existence, and turns him towards the Awakening of himself. Only someone able to respond to the question contained in such a greeting can comprehend Hisamatsu's philosophy of Awakening.

The philosophy of Awakening differs, then, from ordinary philosophy. Kierkegaard criticized Hegel for building a grand philosophical structure while remaining himself in a wretched hovel next door. The philosophy of Awakening is no conceptual structure formed through speculation and devoid of a master. It is closer to Kierkegaard's thought than to Hegel's. Kierkegaard's philosophy was inseparable from his own existence, yet he was by his own admission still a "Christ-in-the-making" (*Werdender Christ*; in *An Unscientific Postscript*, 1846). The philosophy of Awakening, on the other hand, is the philosophy of a Buddha—an awakened one himself—not of a Buddha-in-the-making.

In this sense, the philosophy of Awakening has a greater affinity to Socrates or Spinoza than to Kierkegaard. It has points in common, for example, with the unity of knowledge and action reflected in Socrates' admonition "Know thyself," and with Spinoza's intoxication with God. Yet no matter how closely interwoven their philosophy and life may have been, or how practical, intelligible, and intuitive the rational bases of their philosophies, they still did not break beyond the frame of reason. Neither of their philosophies is ever totally manifested, in the way in which the

philosophy of Awakening is fully expressed in a flower arranged by Hisamatsu or in a greeting he has uttered.

In contrast to ordinary philosophy, the philosophy of Awakening contains within it an element of absolute self-negation which breaks beyond the frame of reason. Without ceasing to be a philosophy of Awakening, it can totally manifest itself in laughter or silence, in a flower or a word of greeting. In this sense, it is not Socratic or Spinozian. It is not philosophy as it is understood in the West, but Awakening itself. Hisamatsu, the philosopher of Awakening, was not a philosopher in the ordinary sense: he was an awakened man.

*How* to awaken to the *what* which is constantly self-determined, and *how* to express it in order to bring others to Awakening, are matters which go beyond the realms of philosophy and art. They belong to religion itself, and constitute what Hisamatsu calls the "religion of Awakening." His "religion of Awakening" is thus in no way different from his "philosophy of Awakening." In Awakening, philosophy and religion are one, not two. Accordingly, everything he did—in scholarship, in art, in life itself—was done as a "total person," in whom the philosopher and the man of religion were one and the same.

## II

In an autobiographical essay entitled "Memories of My Student Life,"[1] Hisamatsu said that he had aspired to become a man of religion from an early age. Raised in a devout Shin Buddhist family, he became, in his own words, a "steadfast young believer" (417). But after he was introduced to scientific knowledge in junior high school, a rational, critical spirit awoke in him, and this, in turn, gave rise to numerous doubts. By the time he graduated, his faith had all but disappeared. Referring to himself in the third person, as he does throughout this essay, he says that he underwent a "conversion from the religious life of naive religious belief which avoids rational doubt, to the critical life of modern man based on autonomous rational judgement and empirical proof. . . . [At the same time] his rational awareness of sin deepened and, though desiring to be rid of it,

[1] The essay "Memories of My Student Life" (*Gakkyū seikatsu no omoide*) is found in *Tōyō-teki Mu* (Oriental Nothingness), Vol. I of *The Collected Works of Hisamatsu Shin'ichi* (Tokyo, 1969), pp. 415–34; hereafter referred to as *Memories*. Page numbers in parentheses refer to this essay.

he neither thought he was destined for hell as a result nor did he long to be rescued from hell and reborn in paradise" (418). In hopes of solving this dilemma, he turned to rational inquiry. He took up the study of philosophy under Nishida Kitarō[2] at Kyoto University. Nishida's "penetrating philosophical insight and deep religious experience" (425), his character and lectures, revived Hisamatsu's fundamental religious concern, and opened up for him a new philosophical perspective on religion.

But he soon confronted existential problems that were unsolvable through philosophy. Finally, deeply despairing of reason, he resolved to "break through this *aporia* by means of Zen" (426). Nishida advised him to do sanzen (Zen practice) under Ikegami Shōzan Rōshi (1856–1928), a Zen master of the Myōshinji monastery. During his first Rōhatsu sesshin (December retreat) under Shōzan Rōshi, Hisamatsu turned into Great Doubt and broke through it to achieve *kenshō* (seeing one's Nature):

> It was not that he had reached an impasse while trying to solve objectively some particular problem. Nor was it that he had failed to solve objectively an all-encompassing universal problem, which then became a great doubt in his mind. Rather, he himself had totally become the Great Doubting Mass. In the manner of "being cornered, changing; changing, passing through," right at that moment the Great Doubting Mass crumbled apart and melted like ice from within . . . leaving not even a hair's space between him and Shōzan Rōshi. Awakened to his formless, free True Self, he gazed upon Shōzan's True Face for the first time. . . . He had awakened to the truth of "no-birth-and-death" which is beyond being and nonbeing; he had realized the meaning of "no-thought-of-good-and-evil" which is apart from value and anti-value. [432–3]

In "Memories of My Student Life," the earnest quest made by Hisamatsu in the period of his life up until his *kenshō* is set forth in some detail. What I have given here is merely an outline. To understand the standpoint

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[2] Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945), the most outstanding philosopher of modern Japan, established a unique system of philosophy based on his deep Zen experience. One of the basic notions of his philosophy is "Absolute Nothingness," around which the Kyoto School, as it has come to be known, developed. As professor of philosophy at Kyoto University from 1914–1928, he had many excellent students, Hisamatsu being one of his earlier ones.

of this radically subjective[3] philosopher, his process of inquiry must be constantly kept in mind, for it forms the background of his intellectual development. Ultimately, the standpoint of Awakening is none other than the place of final resolution at the end of that process. I would now like to clarify Hisamatsu's philosophy of Awakening in the light of that process of inquiry.

## III

Since Western philosophy was introduced in the Meiji period (1868–1912), this highly rational and logical discipline has attracted a great number of Japanese struggling with the problems of life. Many of them turned to philosophy because of dissatisfaction with their ordinary way of life, or with the scientific world-view; others were deeply troubled by ethical shortcomings or moral predicaments. They turned to philosophy in search of something with more fundamental meaning and value. Those whose problem was of a religious nature from the start, sought in philosophy a means to probe their religious concern in greater depth.

In contrast, Hisamatsu turned to philosophy only after he had taken leave of the religion in which he was reared and deeply believed. He said in retrospect that his faith had been merely a case of "leave-it-up-to-the-Almighty-ism which avoided all doubt" (418). It is certain, however, that as a result of the religious atmosphere in which he had been brought up, that faith had been deeply ingrained in him in the early years before he turned to philosophy. Because of this, even after his faith had been destroyed by rational skepticism, his rational awareness of sin became increasingly acute and he earnestly longed to free himself from it.

With a motivation of this intensity turning him to philosophy, the nature of his philosophical inquiry differed somewhat from that of other young people of his time. It is a remarkable coincidence that Hisamatsu's philosophical inquiries began under the guidance of a man with as much penetrating insight and deep religious experience as Nishida Kitarō, a scholar who espoused a philosophy of pure subjectivity. In any case, to

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[3] "Subjective" (*shutai-teki* 主体的) does not indicate "subjective" (*shukan-teki* 主観的) in the epistemological sense as opposed to "objective" (*kyakkan-teki* 客観的). Rather, it refers to the dynamic existential self involved in responsible, self-determined action of a moral, ethical, or religious nature.

Hisamatsu, philosophical inquiry was a problem neither of the theoretical cognition of the world nor of the objective validity of values.

> For him—one who had become accustomed to considering things from the individual to the general, from the peripheral to the basic—the particular concrete problems he confronted at that time became the "moment" for his most fundamental problem. He dealt with individual problems one by one and eventually dug down to the universal source of all problems. The problem turned inward, from the objective to the subjective. No matter how profound his philosophical understanding might have been, however, insofar as it remained objective cognition, he was completely unable to solve the total, existential problem at hand. Faced with this dilemma, he could do nothing. Eventually, he attempted to existentially and fundamentally transform himself. That is to say, his great concern at that point was neither the objective pursuit of reality nor even the objective realization of his own way of being, but ontological self-transformation through practice. [425]

After eight years at Kyoto University, he had come to despair of philosophy and of human reason itself. Before we criticize as hasty this negative appraisal of philosophy and of scholarship in general, we must first understand the meaning he attached to his philosophical inquiry, which takes us to an investigation of the fundamental significance of philosophy itself.

For Hisamatsu, reason was not merely a means for idealistically contemplating the world of intelligibility in some transcendental beyond. Nor was it dualistic intellectual reason scrutinizing the objective world. More than anything else, it has to be autonomous reason, laying by itself the subjective foundation of the self and examining critically all dogmas and presuppositions, those of religion included. This is the reason of the modern age, typified by Cartesian logic, which broke beyond the bounds of scholastic theology through exhaustive application of radical doubt, and by Kantian reason, which criticized all philosophical presuppositions and established the standpoint of practical autonomy. The collapse of his naive faith and his resolution to "leave religion behind and pursue philosophy grounded in reason" (419), led Hisamatsu naturally to the standpoint of autonomous reason described above, rather than to other types of philosophical thought.

At the base of his resolve to turn from religion to philosophy, however, was a deeply existential religious concern not found at the base of modern reason. Lacking this fundamental religious concern, modern reason naively believes it can solve the problems of death and evil by further deepening the standpoint of autonomous reason; in this way, a transcendental, idealistic view of man has come to be established.

As we can see in Hisamatsu's case, however, when a life whose primary concern is religion resolves to base itself on and thoroughly penetrate the standpoint of autonomous reason, that standpoint will inevitably crumble away to the extent it is penetrated, until, finally, the very foundation on which that life stands falls away altogether.

Viewed in a different way, it can be said that the further autonomy is penetrated the deeper one falls into a kind of self-entanglement, until the self-entanglement extends itself throughout one's entire existence. Such self-binding, or self-collapse, is an inescapable self-contradiction inherent in autonomous reason. Hisamatsu's rapid disillusionment with philosophy stems no doubt from his insight into this fact, together with his existential realization that modern autonomous reason, in the above sense, cannot be truly autonomous, and is itself, after all, merely another standpoint of objective knowledge.

Hisamatsu's subsequent commitment to Zen can be seen as an attempt to break through the dilemma of this unavoidable self-entanglement which deepened as he penetrated autonomous reason, and led him inevitably to the Great Doubting Mass. This is substantiated by the description he gave of the circumstances leading up to his Awakening: "He cast off the religion of medieval belief, turned to philosophy grounded in modern reason, broke through the extreme limit of rational philosophy based on objective knowledge, and awakened to the free and unhindered True Self" (433). It was autonomous reason, characterized by self-contradictoriness, that played the decisive role in the establishment of Great Doubt and the eventual breakthrough into Awakening.

The *kenshō* experiences[4] of the men of Zen are the vital links which have transmitted the Zen Dharma to the present day. The Great Doubting Mass, however, has not always been emphasized as the necessary "mo-

[4] Hisamatsu himself does not take *kenshō* (seeing one's Nature, insight into the Self) as an experience, for "experience" indicates something happening in time and space, whereas *kenshō* by nature is transtemporal and transpatial.

ment" of *kenshō*. The saying, "at the bottom of Great Doubt lies Great Awakening," has, to be sure, often been quoted. But in the history of Zen, until Hisamatsu, the kind of self-contradiction found in modern autonomous reason had never before constituted the dynamics behind the establishment of Great Doubt. This point is critical for comprehending Hisamatsu's standpoint of Awakening.

The true *kenshō* experience in Zen transcends historical and ethnic differences. It is identical in all times and in all people. This of course does not signify an abstract universality. Throughout the history of Zen, each Zen man has had his own characteristic "style," the source of which is traceable to the individual nature of the *kenshō* experience. Even after taking into account the deep and thorough nature of Hisamatsu's *kenshō*, we cannot grasp the true individuality of his Zen "style" unless we understand that his realization of the *self-contradictoriness of autonomous reason*, which broke beyond the limits of modern rational philosophy, was the decisive factor behind that experience.

## IV

Although Hisamatsu's *realization of the self-contradictoriness of autonomous reason* constituted the critical dynamics of both the establishment and the resolution of Great Doubt, this does not mean that his Great Doubt was mere intellectual skepticism, or that his Awakening was an intellectual or philosophical self-realization.

As we saw before, Hisamatsu realized the self-contradictoriness within autonomous reason because deeply rooted within his existence was a religious concern he was unable to deal with by means of that reason. This concern, an *existential demand to live absolute truth*, functioned at thebase of his existence both after the crumbling of naive, medieval faith, and while he was attempting to make the modern philosophy of reason into a new foundation of existence. This latent yet unchanging desire to *live* the truth, was, while remaining unsatisfied, stimulated, brought to the surface, and in that way, eventually realized. It was this intense, subjective force that drove Hisamatsu beyond philosophy to Zen. To be sure, the "moment" behind this existential demand was nothing but autonomous reason as the base of the modern philosophy of reason.

This intense existential demand to live absolute truth, spurred by a keen realization of falsehood, is set forth vividly in a letter he wrote at the

time to his mentor, Nishida Kitarō. While this subjective demand was not intellectual or philosophical, neither was it by any means a religious desire to return to naive, medieval faith. As he states in his "Memories,"

> When he parted from so-called theistic religion and despaired of philosophy based on objective knowledge, the path he then chose had to be subjective knowledge grounded in practice and practice grounded in subjective knowledge, not mere religion or mere philosophy. It was as such a path that he chose Zen. [426]

He did not, then, choose Zen as one religious denomination among others or as the way of practice of a particular Buddhist sect. As one who had rejected the standpoints of both theocentric, heteronomous faith and anthropocentric, autonomous reason, he sought a religion without a god, an atheistic religion—a standpoint of absolute religious autonomy that transcends yet does not run contrary to rational autonomy.

This insuppressible need to find a standpoint beyond the extremes of theocentrism and homocentrism, or of heteronomy and autonomy, is a desire that springs from the most fundamental ground of being. A situation in which this presses us urgently from within and yet remains unsatisfied, is a crisis of the most fundamental order. It permeates our entire being. According to Hisamatsu, this crisis is neither absolute intellectual contradiction, nor an absolute dilemma of the will, nor absolute emotional suffering—it is a total, absolute crisis in which these three become one.

The subject in which this absolute, all-encompassing crisis comes to awareness is precisely the "Great Doubting Mass" spoken of in Zen. Hisamatsu describes this mass of Doubt in the account of his first sesshin under Shōzan Rōshi: "He became a Great Doubting Mass, a vast expanse of total blackness. . . . He changed into one great total mass of Doubt" (432). The universal wholeness of this Doubt is directly connected with its exhaustiveness and fundamentality. These three dimensions of Great Doubt are inseparable from the wholeness, exhaustiveness, and fundamentality of the Awakening in which that Doubt is resolved.

These characteristics of Hisamatsu's Great Doubt and subsequent Awakening were sharpened and clarified by his realization of the self-contradictoriness intrinsic in autonomous reason. Doubt or satori which lacks them cannot be true "Great Doubt" or true "Great Awakening." The outstanding followers of Zen who have transmitted the Zen Dharma have all displayed these three dimensions. The originality of Hisamatsu's

standpoint lies in the fact that, in his case, these three characteristics were attained by penetrating beyond rational philosophy based on objective knowledge.

## V

The originality of Hisamatsu's standpoint is even more evident in his Awakening itself, the new life which emerges from the Great Death in which Great Doubt dissolves away. The fundamental crisis of the entire person which appears in Great Doubt, Hisamatsu has termed *absolute antinomy*. For the standpoint of new life which emerges when one breaks through that crisis and extricates oneself from absolute antinomy, he uses the expression *religio-nomy of the absolute Self* (*zettai jisha-teki shūkyō ritsu* 絶対自者的宗教律). What is signified here?

The confrontation of life and death and the conflict of good and evil are the most critical problems in man's religious life. Many people become attached to the life of the present self, and try to rid themselves of death by going beyond it and pursuing eternal life in the future. Although we search endlessly in this way for eternal life, we never attain it. There is no way for us to divest ourselves of death while standing within life, for life and death are originally like the two sides of a coin. Human beings are not existence that *will* die, but existence that is living-*and*-dying at every moment. The crucial problem for religious man, then, is not to avoid death, but to extricate himself from living-and-dying, to die the absolute Death as the death of living-dying life. Likewise, in morality, we seek good and shrink from evil; we try to divest ourselves of evil in the present and arrive at some absolute good in the future. But, trying to rid ourselves of evil, like the attempt to rid oneself of death, can only result in transmigration in a false, misguided endlessness. Here too, the problem of ridding ourselves of sin as an absolute conflict between good and evil—as opposed to merely divesting oneself of evil—is an essentially religious concern.

The confrontation between life and death and the conflict between good and evil cannot exist apart from self-realization. Absolute Death—the dying to living-dying life—and sin as an absolute conflict between good and evil, constitute the absolute existential antinomy immanent in man. They are joined as a whole in the ground of human self-realization, and form the fundamental structure of that self-realization. Great Doubt, as the crisis of the whole person, is the total emergence of this absolutely antinomical structure of human self-realization.

The problems of life-and-death and good and evil have not been neglected by the Zen masters of the past. They have spoken of life-and-death as "the matter of gravest importance," warning us that "man is impermanent and passes quickly away." They have said that we should "not commit evils but do all that is good." Hisamatsu, however, does not deal with the problem of life-and-death merely as a problem of life and death; he universalizes it, takes it to its very source, and grasps it as the problem of existence-nonexistence. Likewise, he grasps the problem of good and evil on a more universal dimension, as the problem of value-antivalue. The absolute antinomy in Great Doubt, then, centers around existence-nonexistence and value-antivalue.

Why does he universalize the problems of life-and-death and good and evil? The answer is found in the fact that he grasps the polarity of life and death and the conflict between good and evil through his realization of the inadequacy of "modern autonomous reason." This is an indication of the wholeness, exhaustiveness, and fundamentality of his grasp of Great Doubt, and is related to his clear designation of Great Doubt as absolute subjective antinomy. From Hisamatsu's standpoint, it is more accurate to say that subjective antinomy is Great Doubt than to say the reverse.

His abandonment of religion for philosophy based on reason, his attempt to penetrate the standpoint of autonomous reason, and his realization that such autonomy is itself a kind of self-entanglement, all combined to work as a stimulus in both the establishment and dissolution of Great Doubt. Hisamatsu, keenly realizing that autonomy based on reason could never be totally penetrated or even maintain itself, was unable to turn to heteronomous, theistic theonomy or to dwell in rational, atheistic autonomy. In the midst of this crisis, rational autonomy finally cast itself off. At that point, Great Doubt crumbled away and the Original Self came forth. Hisamatsu recounts this in the following way:

> When autonomy cannot, by any means, be maintained as such, it must strip itself of the self. . . . The way of this negation must be such that it is not contradictory to autonomy. Autonomy is not simply negated; rather, through its own negation, it brings its original nature to complete realization. It gains new life. Life is not gained from something other than oneself. It comes from the ground of autonomy itself. This rebirth must be different in character from theonomy.[5]

Resulting from this autonomous rebirth is the *religio-nomy of the absolute Self*, the Awakening of the *True, Formless Self*. In the awakening of that Self, autonomous reason, caught in the crisis of being unable to maintain itself, is negated and cast off. To Hisamatsu, awakening to the True Self is inseparable from this negating and stripping away of autonomous reason. It is the emergence of original, absolute autonomy, which is not dependent on reason, God, or anything else. Hisamatsu writes,

> With the awakening of the True Self, the rational self is cast off in negation. This results in autonomy of a *deeper dimension*, which has broken beyond and completely shaken off the limitations of rational autonomy. It is *fundamental, absolute autonomy* free of the fatalistic, absolute antinomy that characterizes rational autonomy.[6]

Hisamatsu's "Awakening," then, is the awakening and emergence of this fundamental, absolute autonomy.

## VI

What sort of perspective, or world, is this standpoint of Awakening? It is a world with neither God nor man, transcendence nor immanence, self nor other, mind nor matter, life nor death, good nor evil, right nor wrong, love nor hate, inner nor outer, movement nor stillness, time nor space, past nor future nor present. In Awakening, even the world described in this way does not exist. What, then, it may be asked, is the true world of Awakening? It is the world of pure "Nothingness" in which not a single thing exists. In Zen, it has been described in various ways: "empty space," "aspectless," "formless," "no-thing," "vastly open, without holiness," "the emptiness of all things." It is a realm with no polarity or discrimination, no spatial limits, and no temporal beginning or end. Moreover, since it is free of both delusion and satori, though we speak of a "world of Awakening," this does not mean there is *something* called "Awakening."

Pure Nothingness is not nothingness immanent in human beings. It

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[5] From "Mushinron" (Atheism), in *Zettai shutai dō* (The Way of Absolute Subjectivity), Vol. II of the *Collected Works*, pp. 53–93.

[6] From "Zettai kiki to fukkatsu" (Ultimate Crisis and Resurrection) in Vol. II of his *Collected Works*, pp. 138–95. See *Eastern Buddhist* VIII, I (May 1975), pp. 12–29, and VIII, 2 (October 1975), pp. 37–66, for an English translation of this article.

has no trace of human nature, and is, for that reason, an absolutely "other" world to humans, i.e., a de-humanized world. Yet it is not a world that receives life from a transcendent God, nor a world believed to receive life from a loving God who is deeply immanent in both the world and man. It also differs from the world of the *unio mystica* (assuming such a union is possible). It is a "de-theized" world, in which God has been completely negated and cast off.

The world of pure Nothingness (or Awakening) establishes itself in absolute Nothingness. It has divested itself of all human nature and is absolutely other to man, yet does not turn from humanity to divinity. It transcends all aspects of man and God, the profane and the sacred, time and eternity, philosophy and religion, knowledge and faith. It brings about the absolute transcendence of transcendence, though not in the direction of some distant beyond: the very standpoint of transcendence is inverted from its foundation. This is a fundamental conversion of all things, including even the standpoint of immanence transcended by transcendence. And yet, this transcendence exists right here in the present; eternity is realized as the present, and that which is absolutely other is precisely one's own True Self. Such is the true aspect of pure Nothingness as Awakening.

Since Nothingness in this sense is found only in the spiritual heritage of the East, Hisamatsu terms it "Oriental Nothingness." As he himself points out, however, this signifies that it is historically unique to the East, not peculiar to it. In essence, it can be found universally in both the East and the West. If peculiar to anything, it is *peculiar to human beings*.

The fact that pure Nothingness is peculiar to man becomes clearer if we recall that the standpoint of Awakening emerges because man's subjective, absolute antinomy is cast off *autonomously*, and also that the resultant rebirth is autonomous as well. This self-extrication does not occur by means of an other. *The self autonomously extricates itself* (*jiko ga jiritsu-teki ni datsuji suru* 自己が自律的に脱自する): this means that the True Self awakens of itself. Autonomous self-extrication in this sense is peculiar to man's self-conscious existence. When Hisamatsu equated the world of Awakening with the world of pure Nothingness, he designated Nothingness as "subjective Nothingness" (*shutai-teki mu* 主体的無) a clarification he considered essential for the philosophy of Awakening.

Pure Nothingness as Awakening has a cosmological character. In Zen, it has been compared to an "empty sky"; it has been expressed as "Mind without form, filling the ten directions." When pure Nothingness as

Awakening is realized through the autonomous self-extrication described above, however, it goes beyond cosmological nothingness. It is, above all, subjective Nothingness. That is the reason Hisamatsu not only spoke of pure Nothingness (Awakening) as Absolute Nothingness, but further designated it as "subjective Nothingness."

Although pure Nothingness as Awakening is a subjective Nothingness peculiar to man, subjective existence here means something different from ordinary human subjectivity. It is a subjective existence realized as a result of "de-humanization," the discarding of human nature in all its forms. The traditional Zen expressions of this are extremely apt. "Your Original Face before your parents were born," and the "True Person without Rank," are two examples. In elucidating this philosophy of Awakening, Hisamatsu expressed it as "subjective existence as Nothingness" (*mu-teki shutai* 無的主体) to show that it was not subjectivity-as-being, but *formless subjective existence* (*musō no shutai* 無相の主体).

## VII

In the world of Awakening, then, Nothingness is subjective Nothingness, and subjective existence is subjectivity as Nothingness. This means that Nothingness as Awakening is originally the extrication of the self from itself (*datsuji* 脱自). Radically self-extricating oneself from the self-as-being (that is, the self as an entity; *u-teki jiko* 有的自己), or rather, the subjective *act* of so doing, is the manifestation of "Nothingness." Nothingness as Awakening, then, is not a matter called "Nothingness" but *the absolute act of self-extricating oneself* from the self-as-being. The self-as-being, however, cannot, as it is, self-extricate itself. This is the inevitable fate of the self-as-being, the subjective absolute antinomy mentioned before.

Self-extrication implies essentially the emergence of the emancipated Self, brought about only through one's own power. Extrication from the self-as-being actually occurs not by virtue of the self-as-being, but because the emancipated Self manifests itself. Consequently, the fact that Nothingness is essentially the absolute act of self-extrication signifies that Nothingness is originally the *autonomous emergence of the self-extricated Self* (*datsuji-teki jiko no jiritsu-teki genjō* 脱自的自己の自律的現成), the act expressed in the word "awaken."

Nothingness as Awakening is thus in no way an objectifiable *something* called "Nothingness," or any other matter outside the subjective Self.

It is, in every respect, "subjective Nothingness." In this case, "subjective" should not be understood to imply that the self-extrication is brought about by the self-as-being; the subject of self-extrication is the originally emancipated Self, "subjective existence as Nothingness." Although "subjective Nothingness" and "subjective existence as Nothingness" are two different verbal expressions, they point to one essential functioning, or Act (*Tat*): the functioning called "Nothingness," the act called "Awakening."

Awakening, then, as a subjective act, is essentially an autonomous self-extrication. More precisely, it is the self-extricated Self autonomously manifesting itself, an absolutely *subjective* and, at the same time, absolutely *objective* event transcendent of the self-as-being. It is to discover oneself in the *boundless expanse of Self-Awakening* which opens out in a vast, clear immensity upon the dissolution of Great Doubt. In this boundless expanse of Self-Awakening, free of all spatial restriction or temporal beginning and end, one self-awakens to a new Self. This expanse is prior to the separation of subject and object, and, as in the Zen phrase, "prior to the first portents of the sprouting of life." To the self-as-being, it is a world of utter newness, completely "other," and its discovery occasions great surprise and joy. It is, as such, the fully emancipated, self-extricated Self. The emergence of this Self is none other than the manifestation of the clearly expanding openness of Self-Awakening. To the self-extricated Self, this boundless expanse is the *Self* in its originality. The absolute present is realized here.

In Awakening, that which awakens and that which is awakened to are one. This is because within the total, subjective Act (*Tat*) expressed in the word "awaken," the casting off of the self-as-being is precisely the emergence of the clear expanse of Self-Awakening—the true manifestation of the self-extricated Original Self in which subject-object duality is completely overcome. In the clear and unrestricted emergence of the expanse of Self-Awakening (the absolute Act designated by the word "awaken"), *the Self is the Self* in its original form, and all things, as themselves, are *self-attaining*. This state of affairs is *the totally awakened absolute present*.

This Awakening is the source, or starting point, of all things. The boundless expanse of the self-extricated Self opens out, permeating all things in their entirety. Speaking from the relative standpoint prior to this opening out, Self-Awakening may be said to flow backward into every limited

thing. Emerging here is the world in which each and every being is perfectly fulfilled: "Mountains are just mountains, rivers just rivers," "The inlet moon shines, the pine wind blows." It is the world of Suchness, where "The sound of a mountain stream preaches with the eloquence of Buddha, and the shapes of the mountains are pure Buddha-body." Such recountings of the landscape of satori in traditional Zen are a function of Zen's cosmological character. The source of it all is the self-extricated realization Hisamatsu calls "Awakening."

The *autonomy* of his self-extricated realization is sharp and clear to an extent never before seen in the long history of Zen. This accounts for the following two salient characteristics of the world of his Awakening.

The first is the emphasis on the subjectivity and self-nature of Awakening. This links directly with the emphasis placed on the original-ness of Awakening, on abrupt awakening and its wholeness and purity, and on complete denial of the "process" of gradual awakening. While it is true that "other-ness" of other existence and the recurrence of Awakening after satori are not greatly emphasized in Hisamatsu's standpoint of Awakening, that does not mean that they are disregarded. The subjectivity stressed in the standpoint of Awakening is beyond the dichotomy of self and other, and Awakening, however abrupt, is constantly self-renewing. These points are included as a matter of course, and in both of them, the subjectivity, self-nature, and originalness of Awakening, and the wholeness of immediate awakening, are all clearly and emphatically stressed.

The second distinctive characteristic of the world of his Awakening is the emphasis on humans and history. Hisamatsu advocated a new humanism as a standpoint of all mankind. This does not mean nonhuman sentient beings and nature are ignored. The universality of the standpoint of Awakening is, as mentioned above, cosmological. Hisamatsu, however, emphasizes man in his standpoint of Awakening because the cosmological perspective is often misconstrued to mean a mere naturalism or animism, thus obscuring both the subjective self-extricated realization—which makes the cosmological perspective possible—and its autonomy. This again links directly to his emphasis on the "creation of history." Without keeping in mind that his standpoint of "Awakening" emerges through the realization of the self-contradictoriness pervading modern autonomous reason, we cannot fully understand the reason for his advocation of F.A.S.—To awaken to the *F*ormless Self, to stand in the standpoint of *A*ll mankind,

and to create *S*uprahistorical history—as that which expresses true Zen.

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The *content* of the "philosophy of Awakening" can be summed up in the following five points:

1. The philosophy of Awakening is the philosophy of the Formless Self.
2. The philosophy of Awakening is the philosophy of unified study and practice.
3. The philosophy of Awakening is the philosophy standing upon alternative universality.
4. The philosophy of Awakening is the philosophy inseparable from method.
5. The philosophy of Awakening is the philosophy of creation and compassion.

In this essay, I have attempted to describe how Hisamatsu's philosophy of Awakening came to be realized, and to explain what its standpoint is. An elucidation of the content of the "philosophy of Awakening" will have to be reserved for a future article.

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